than two transactions;

point storing means for storing point information comprising the issued points for each customer identification;

point notification means for notifying the customer of the point information; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to the customer identification,

wherein the point notification means notifies the customer of the point information before the customer carries out transactions and wherein the point issue means comprises rate management means for changing a point calculation rate according to each of the more than two transactions.

## REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed April 13, 2001, claims 17, 28, 28, 29, 30, 32-35, 50, 52, and 53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Schultz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,056,019) in view of Burton et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,025,372); claim 37 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Schultz in view of Burton and further in view of Rudd (U.S. Patent No. 4,292,508); claim 24 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Schultz in view of Humble (U.S. Patent No. 4,949,256); claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Schultz in view of Humble and further in view of Burton; and claim 26 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Schultz. The foregoing rejections are respectfully traversed.

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 17, 18, 24, 25, 26, 28, 50, and 52 have been amended. Claims 65 and 66 have been added. A Version with Markings to Show Changes Made to the claims (and new claims 65 and 66) is included herewith, numbered as pages 11-16 of this Amendment.

Claims17, 18, 24-26, 28-30, 32-35, 37, 50, 52, 53, 65, and 66 are pending and under consideration. Claims 17, 18, 24-26, 28, 50, 52, 65, and 66 are independent claims. Claims 29/28, 30/28, 32/30, 33/30, 34/30, 35/30, 37/35, and 53/52 are dependent claims.

Schultz et al is directed to an automated purchase reward accounting method including the steps of providing each of potential offerees an identification card with a consumer identification code thereon, storing information with respect to purchase reward offers in in-store

computer data banks and in management data banks, identifying an offeree at a point-of-sale terminal by reading the consumer identification of the offeree, comparing products purchased by the identified offeree at the point-of-sale terminal with the stored information in respect of the purchase reward offers, identifying purchase reward offers available to the identified offeree for the purchased products, recording purchase transactions of products for which reward will be provided, providing on a periodic basis to the identified offeree a listing of the identified offeree's purchase transactions of products for which reward are available to the identified offeree, and identifying in the listing the identified offeree's progress toward completion of the requirements for purchase reward offers available to the identified offeree.

Burton et al. is directed to a system for an incentive award program for a company having individual program participants and having levels of performance set as goals to be achieved by participants for the company.  The Burton system includes computer memory means for data storing of information identifying the participants for the company, including computer memory means for data storing of information identifying the participants, credit instruments for the participants and computer data processing means for assigning individual credit instrument account numbers and corresponding accounts to the individual participants, computer memory means for storing levels of performance to be achieved by the participants under the incentive program in order for the individual participants to have money credited for available use to the individual participants' credit instrument account, and computer data processing means for allocating monetary amounts to be credited for available use through the individual participant's credit instruments based on the participant's meeting of a designated level of performance under the incentive program.

Humble is directed to a coupon validation network in which a first coupon processing terminal includes means for reading coupon account cards to be carried by customers, each card having encoded means uniquely identifying a coupon customer account, means for reading encoded coupons presented for redemption, means for validating read coupons by comparison of each of coupons with a local information file of redeemable coupons and with each product purchased during a transaction for TM which the coupons have been presented, means for comparing each of coupons in any one of the customer coupon accounts with each product purchased during a transaction for cashing-in coupons presented in advance, means for automatically accumulating credit values for validated coupons, means for preventing subsequent revalidation of validated coupons, a second coupon processing terminals adapted for independent use by  customers apart from specific purchases and sale transactions and

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having means for identifying all valid coupons presented in advance for later redemption credit and means for updating a third local information file, means for transferring data between a central control system and a plurality of local control systems, and means for adapting a third local information file to delete cashed-in coupons and to add coupons which are presented, read and validated, but which do not correspond to any of the products purchased during the transaction. Control systems and a first and a second coupon processing terminals further include means for allowing merchants to read, validate and redeem coupons automatically to accumulate date facilitating accurate calculation of full potential credit values, to enable the coupon issuers to conveniently reimburse the merchants for the value of valid coupons redeemed upon purchase of corresponding products and to provide customers a means for permanently claiming credit for their coupons without carrying them, the coupons being discardable after redemption for one of purchase and credit.

The Examiner's assertions in the Action of Official Notice are respectfully traversed. The Examiner is respectfully requested to cite a reference disclosing same or withdraw same.

In the present invention, a computer tracks (through the point accumulation means) the points accumulated by a customer, and the customer accesses the accumulated points through a terminal (refer to Figure 2 and the specification, page10, et. seq.)

Schultz (the primary reference relied upon), though, teaches away from the present invention in that Schultz discloses (in the abstract) that purchases of customers (and rewards) are presented to the customers through a reward booklet, a periodic status report, and a reward certificate generated by a printer (refer to Figures 1 and 2, elements 10c and 16-19, of Schultz). Therefore, Schultz, either alone or in combination with Burton, Rudd, and/or, Humble, teaches away from the present invention.

Each of independent claims 17, 18, 24-26, 28, 50, 52, 65, and 66 recites (using the recitation of claim 17 as an example) a "point management system employing a computer" and comprising "point accumulation means for calculating and accumulating the issued points".

Moreover, each of independent claims 17, 18, 24, 25, 26, 28, 50, and 52 recites that the customer is notified of (or accesses) accumulated points (or selected services) "through the terminal" (as recited in, for example, independent claim 17).

The above-mentioned dependent claims also recite patentably distinguishing features of their own. For example, claim 29/28 recites "the point accumulation means displays the

decreased points on a display by denoting an alphanumeric number representing the customer's accumulated points and by counting down the customer's accumulated points in order".

None of the foregoing references relied upon, either alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the foregoing features of the present invention.

Withdrawal of the foregoing rejections is respectfully requested.

An Information Disclosure Statement is filed concurrently herewith.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.
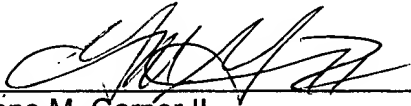
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: _Sept. 13 2001_          By: _____
                                    Gene M. Garner II
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**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**

Please **AMEND** the claims as follows:

**17. (TWICE AMENDED)** A point management system employing a computer for managing points issued to each customer who receives service according to the issued points, comprising:

point issue means for issuing the points to the customer according to transactions performed by the customer;

point accumulation means for calculating and accumulating the issued points of a current transaction and issued point of a previous transaction;

point notification means for notifying the customer of point information comprising the issued points; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to customer identification information;

wherein the point notification means includes service contents storage means for storing a list of types of services and corresponding points, reads data out of the storage means according to a type selected by the customer through a terminal, and notifies the customer of the read data through the terminal.

**18. (TWICE AMENDED)** A point management system employing a computer for managing points issued to each customer who receives service according to the issued points, comprising:

point issue means for issuing the points to the customer according to transactions performed by the customer;

point accumulation means for calculating and accumulating the issued points;

point notification means for notifying the customer of point information comprising the issued points; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to customer identification information;

wherein the point notification means includes service contents storage means for storing a list of services and corresponding points, selects a range of services available for the

cumulative points of the customer, and notifies the customer of the selected services <u>through a</u> <u>terminal</u>.

**24. (TWICE AMENDED)** A point management system employing a computer for managing points issued to each customer who receives service according to the issued points, comprising:

point issue means for issuing the points to the customer according to transactions performed by the customer;

point accumulation means for calculating and accumulating the issued points, includes condition monitor means for changing the accumulated points according to predetermined conditions; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to customer identification information;

wherein the condition monitor means adds interest to the customer's points according to the accumulated points and periods of time<u>, and wherein the customer accesses the</u> <u>accumulated points stored on the computer through a terminal</u>.

**25. (TWICE AMENDED)** A point management system employing a computer for managing points issued to each customer who receives service according to the issued points, comprising:

point issue means for issuing the points to the customer according to transactions performed by the customer;

point accumulation means for calculating and accumulating the issued points, includes condition monitor means for changing the accumulated points according to predetermined conditions; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to customer identification information;

wherein the condition monitor means decreases the customer's points if the customer does not carryout a transaction during a predetermined period<u>, and wherein the customer</u> <u>accesses the accumulated points stored on the computer through a terminal</u>.

**26. (TWICE AMENDED)** A point management system employing a computer for managing points issued to each customer who receives service according to the issued points,

comprising:

point issue means for issuing the points to the customer according to transactions performed by the customer;

point accumulation means for calculating and accumulating the issued points; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to customer identification information;

wherein the point accumulation means includes means for converting the customer's points managed by a group of stores into points managed by another group of stores according to a predetermined rate if the customer requests the conversion, and wherein the customer accesses the accumulated points stored on the computer through a terminal.

28. **(TWICE AMENDED)** A point management system employing a computer for managing points issued to each customer who receives service according to the issued points, comprising:

point issue means for issuing the points to the customer according to transactions performed by the customer;

point accumulation means for calculating and accumulating the issued points; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to customer identification information;

wherein the point management system provides a service including a software service in accordance with an amount of the accumulated points, and the point accumulation means decreases the customer's accumulated points according to a period of time of providing the software service, and wherein the customer accesses the accumulated points stored on the computer through a terminal.

29. **(AS ONCE AMENDED)** The point management system according to claim 28, wherein the software service is provided to the customer with image and voice data through communication circuits, and the point accumulation means displays the decreased points on a display by denoting an alphanumeric number representing the customer's accumulated points and by counting down the customer's accumulated points in order.

30. **(AS ONCE AMENDED)** The point management system according to claim 28, wherein the point accumulation means displays the decreased points on a display by

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denoting a colored striped line thereof and by reducing the length of the  striped line .

32. (AS ORIGINAL)  The point management system according to claim 30, wherein the point information includes target points and corresponding electronic services.

33. (AS ORIGINAL)  The point management system according to claim 30, wherein the pint information includes services corresponding to the customer's cumulative points provided by the point accumulation means.

34.     (AS ORIGINAL)  The point management system according to claim 30, wherein the point information includes the customer's cumulative points, or a shortage of points with respect to target points registered or specified by the customer.

35. (AS ORIGINAL)  The point management system according to claim 30, wherein the point information includes the validity of the customer's cumulative points.

37. (AS ORIGINAL)  The point management system according to claim 35, wherein the point issue means issues points for each transaction while changing points or point calculation rates allocated for commodities at random within a predetermined range.

**50. (TWICE AMENDED)**  A point management system  employing a computer for managing points issued to each customer who receives service according to the issued points, comprising:

point issue means for issuing the points to the customer according to transactions performed by the customer;

point accumulation means for calculating and accumulating the issued points;

point notification means for notifying the customer of point information comprising the issued points; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to customer identification information;

wherein the  point notification means comprises service contents storage means for storing a list of types of services and corresponding points, and according to a request from the customer displays <u>on a terminal</u> the list of the types of services and corresponding points  to the

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customer.

52. **(TWICE AMENDED)** A point management system employing a computer for managing points issued to each customer who receives service according to the issued points, comprising:

point issue means for issuing the points to the customer according to transactions performed by the customer;

point accumulation means for calculating and accumulating the issued points;

point notification means for notifying the customer of point information comprising the issued points; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to customer identification information;

wherein the point notification means further comprises service contents storage means for selecting a range of services available for the accumulated points of the customer, and notifies the customer of the selected services through a terminal.

53. **(AS ONCE AMENDED)** The point management system according to claim 52, wherein the service contents storage means stores the point information comprising target points for a service requested by the customer, the customer's accumulated points, and shortage points relative to the customer's target.

Please **ADD** the following new claims 65 and 66:

65. **(NEW)** A point management system employing a computer for managing points issued to each customer who receives service according to the issued points, comprising:

point issue means for issuing the points to the customer according to transactions performed by the customer;

point accumulation means for calculating and accumulating the issued points for more than two transactions;

point notification means for notifying the customer of the point information comprising the issued points; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to customer

identification information,

wherein the point issue means comprises rate management means for changing a point calculation rate according to each of the more than two transactions.

66.    **(NEW)** A point management system employing a computer for managing points issues to each customer who receives service according to issued points, comprising:

point issue means for issuing the points to the customer according to transactions performed by the customer;

point accumulating means for calculating and accumulating the issued points for more than two transactions;

point storing means for storing point information comprising the issued points for each customer identification;

point notification means for notifying the customer of the point information; and

customer identification means for identifying the customer according to the customer identification,

wherein the point notification means notifies the customer of the point information before the customer carries out transactions and wherein the point issue means comprises rate management means for changing a point calculation rate according to each of the more than two transactions.